



Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot *Niagara County, NY*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 150 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA has selected Niagara County for a Brownfields Pilot. Niagara County (population approximately 220,000) covers 530 square miles in the northwest corner of New York and includes three cities, five villages, and twelve towns. The county's major industries (steel production, aircraft, chemical, specialty ceramics and paper manufacturing) have experienced a significant decline that has left many potentially contaminated industrial sites vacant or underused. Unemployment and per capita incomes in Niagara County typically have lagged behind state averages, and the county's population dropped almost 9% from 1960 to 1990. The cleanup and redevelopment of brownfields sites in the county is key to job creation and stabilization of the region's economic health.

More than 70 sites in Niagara County are known to contain hazardous substances, including 35 federal Superfund sites. Many other abandoned and potentially contaminated sites exist throughout the county. However, the county lacks the resources to catalog and assess brownfields. Niagara County's Pilot will target three sites to establish a sustainable process for identifying and assessing brownfields.

PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Niagara County,
New York*

Date of Announcement:
May 1998

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets three sites for Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments to serve as models for cooperative brownfields redevelopment.

Contacts:

Department of Planning,
Development & Tourism
Niagara County
(716) 439-7235

Regional Brownfields Team
U.S. EPA - Region 2
(212) 637-4314

Visit the EPA Region 2 Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/r02earth/superfund/brownfld/bfmainpg.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

OBJECTIVES

The Pilot's objective is to identify, assess, and plan for cleanup and redevelopment that can return contaminated and potentially contaminated sites to appropriate uses. The Pilot will permit the county to undertake a comprehensive process that benefits all of its 20 communities. Pilot funds will be used to catalog and map brownfields in the county; create a working group of community stakeholders; provide an effective process for public involvement; prioritize sites; and identify mechanisms to fund brownfields cleanup and redevelopment. Through this process, three brownfields sites will be targeted for Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments. The Pilot will seek to achieve these objectives through collaboration with, the inclusiveness of, and resource sharing with all public and private stakeholders. As a regional approach to identifying and assessing brownfields, the countywide strategy will serve as a model to illustrate that brownfields can benefit from a regional planning, cleanup, and redevelopment focus.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Creating an inventory of brownfields throughout the county and using a geographic information system (GIS) to map these sites;
- Establishing a publicly accessible Brownfields Information Center which will house data created during the program;
- Conducting outreach activities to educate and involve residents and other stakeholders. This process will be highly public, involving individual citizens, block groups, and other stakeholders throughout the Pilot;
- Creating an evaluation process to prioritize sites; and
- Conducting site assessments at three high-priority sites.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.